

WASHINGTON, DC - House Democratic Whip Steny H. Hoyer (MD) gave the following statement on the House Floor today urging a balanced, bipartisan solution to sequestration. Below are his remarks and a link to the video:

Click [here](#) to watch the video.

“Madam Speaker, this bill is another instance of this Republican caucus walking away from its responsibility. The budget sequester was never intended to be a solution in and of itself. It was meant to be the blunt instrument to force compromise. Unfortunately, compromise is a dirty word around here in some quarters.

“To lay out conditions as this bill does, requiring one side to concede before negotiations even begin - while solving only part of the problem - disregards sequestration's fundamental purpose: to be equally unacceptable to both sides that it forces compromise.

“This bill, which I strongly oppose, essentially says, let's pretend. Let's pretend we don't have a deficit challenge. It says, let's pretend we can solve our problems by cutting domestic spending alone. No rational human being believes that's the case. No cuts to Republicans' favorite programs. No elimination of tax loopholes for oil companies or anybody else. No increases in revenue by asking the wealthiest to contribute a little more to setting our country on a sound path.

“We're collecting the lowest amount of revenues we've collected in 70 years in this country. And we haven't cut spending. And we increased spending in the last Administration very substantially. By the way, a greater percentage than this Administration has increased the deficits, 86% versus 41% - check the figures. What we need, Madam Speaker, is pragmatism, principle, and serious governing. We need to be honest with the American people.

“Both bipartisan commissions that explored this issue concluded that the best solution is a balanced approach that addresses revenues, entitlements, and targeted cuts to domestic and defense spending. To achieve such a balanced solution we need something that is sorely lacking in this House: courage and a willingness to compromise. To come together, to reason together, and to make tough decisions together.

“Sequester is the direct result of Republican policies and is a part of the Republican strategy to cut spending. You keep saying, well, this is a Democratic policy. This is not a Democratic policy. It's an irrational policy, but it's in your bills and in your rules. Now, instead of working with Democrats to turn off the sequester, Republicans are trying to paint the sequester as a Democratic initiative. That is false. Untrue. The Republican Cut, Cap and Balance bill enforces its cuts and its caps, how? Through sequestration. That's what you voted for.

“After the agreement was reached on the Budget Control Act that put the sequester in place, Speaker Boehner said, 'I got 98% of what I wanted.' Now our Republican colleagues are attempting to undo the sequester in a way that lets them off the hook politically but puts America at risk financially.

“Democrats have an alternative. Mr. Van Hollen just spoke of it. It would repeal the sequester for a year by asking that the wealthiest in our country – why? Because they can help a little more, not because they're bad. God bless them. And by the way, we're most of those as well, folks.

“I hope my friends on the other side of the aisle, who I know are as deeply concerned about our deficits and debt as I am, will join Democrats in defeating this bill and sending a message that only by working together can we find the solutions we need. America expects that of us.”

###